

HUGH CAPET OF FRANCE AND BYZANTIUM

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I. HUGH CAPET'S LETTER IN 988 TO THE BYZANTINE EMPERORS BASIL II AND CONSTANTINE VIII

THE end of the tenth century was one of the most important periods in the history of Mediaeval France. The long-continued rivalry and strife between the Carolingians and the descendants of Robert the Strong, known as the Robertians, came to an end in 987, when Hugh Capet, the great-grandson of Robert the Strong, was proclaimed king of France. With the support of the two outstanding figures of that time, Adalbero, Archbishop of Rheims, and Cardinal Gerbert, the future Pope Sylvester II (999–1003), he succeeded in gaining the tottering throne of feudal France, suddenly left vacant by the premature death of the last Carolingian, Louis V, and in founding in France a dynasty which was to rule in unbroken succession up to 1328. At his accession Hugh realized the unsteadiness of his new position, but he had every confidence in himself and he set at once about the difficult and delicate task of establishing his power. On June 1, 987, he was proclaimed king; on July 3 he was crowned at Rheims by Archbishop Adalbero; on Christmas Day of the same year he crowned his son Robert at Orleans as his coruler; and we shall consider in this paper his letter written at the beginning of the year 988 to the Byzantine Emperors Basil II and Constantine VIII, asking them for a bride for Robert.

It was a daring step of Hugh Capet's to ask the Byzantine emperors for a bride for his son. At the time, the two brothers Basil II (976–1025) and Constantine VIII (976–1028), the sons of the late Emperor Romanus II, were joint rulers of the Byzantine Empire. Hugh was not yet secure in his new position in his own country, and he was not yet universally recognized. But he wished to strengthen his international position, and he had an appropriate example to follow in the marriage of the Emperor Otto II of the Holy Roman Empire with the Byzantine princess Theophanu. He hoped by similarly establishing ties of blood with the Byzantine emperor that he might enhance his prestige within his own country. "For in case of the realization of Hugh's hope," Bubnov writes, "his grandson would be of the same half-Greek origin as Otto III (Otto II's son), and it might even happen that they would be destined to reign at the same time."¹

¹ N. Bubnov, *Collected Volume of Gerbert's Letters as an Historical Source* (1883–1897), II, 2 (St. Petersburg, 1890), p. 495 (in Russian). This excellent work on Gerbert's Letters based on a close study of manuscript tradition is almost unknown outside Russia. It is mentioned neither in M. Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, II (München, 1923), pp. 738–739 (on Gerbert's letters), nor in George Sarton, *Introduction to*

As he did with many other important documents, Hugh entrusted Gerbert, who at that time was his counsellor and supporter, with drawing up his message to the Byzantine emperors; accordingly, our text represents Gerbert's wording, though the idea and plan were most probably suggested to him by Hugh himself. Here follows in an English version the text of Hugh Capet's message as it has been preserved among Gerbert's letters.²

To the Orthodox Emperors Basil and Constantine, Hugh, by the grace of God the King of the Franks (Basilio et Constantino imperatoribus orthodoxis Hugo gratia Dei rex Francorum).

Both the nobility of your family and the glory of your great deeds urge and constrain us to love you; for you seem to be persons whose friendship may be considered most valuable in human affairs. We are seeking this most sacred friendship and a most suitable alliance (justissimamque societatem), asking by the latter neither your dominions (regna) nor your wealth. On the contrary, this agreement will make available to you that which belongs to us; this our association (conjunctio), if you desire it, will be of great use and will bear great fruit. For, if we stand together (nobis obstantibus), neither Gaul (Gallus) nor German will assail the borders of the Roman Empire (Romani imperii). Therefore, in order that these blessings may be perpetual, since we have an only son who is also king, and since we are not able to find for matrimony any one who may be equal to him, because of the consanguinity between us and our neighboring kings, we ask most earnestly for a daughter of the Holy Empire (filiam sancti imperii praecipuo affectu quaerimus). If this request pleases your most serene ears, let us know either by an imperial epistle (Havet: sacris imperialibus; Olleris: scriptis) or by trustworthy messengers, in order that, through ambassadors from us worthy of Your Majesty, what has been inscribed on paper (Havet: sonuerint in chartis; Olleris: cartis) may be completed in reality.³

Havet's rather conjectural dating of the letter between January and March, 988, is correct. Since the letter refers to Robert as king, it could not have been written before December 25, 987, the day when he was crowned at Orleans. On the other hand, the letter is numbered 111 in the collection of

the History of Science, I (Baltimore, 1927), pp. 669–671. The French historian Jules Lair, however, devotes a special appendix to Bubnov's work. *Études critiques sur divers textes des X^e et XI^e siècles*. I. Bulle du Pape Sergius IV. Lettres de Gerbert (Paris, 1899), pp. 389–425.

² I am making use of the text of the letter in two editions: A. Olleris, *Oeuvres de Gerbert pape sous le nom de Sylvestre II collationnées sur les manuscrits précédées de sa biographie, suivies de notes critiques et historiques* (Clermont-Ferrand, Paris, 1867), pp. 69–70: epistola (CXI) 127. Julien Havet, *Lettres de Gerbert* (983–997), (Paris, 1889), pp. 101–102, letter 111. Except for a few insignificant variants, the text of the letter is identical in both editions. From the old edition of A. Duchesne, this letter has also been published in Migne, *P.L.*, CXXXIX, pp. 229–230.

³ This letter has been translated into French by Ch. Pfister, *Études sur le règne de Robert le Pieux* (996–1031), (Paris, 1885), pp. 42–43, and by F. Lot, *Les derniers Carolingiens* (954–991), (Paris, 1891), p. 218; into Russian by Bubnov, *op. cit.*, II, 2, pp. 496–497, and by A. Vasiliev, *Viz. Vremennik*, V (1898), p. 506.

Gerbert's letters, which are arranged chronologically; and the next letter, 112, was written before Easter, 988, which fell that year on April 8. Our letter, accordingly, must have been written before this date.⁴

For a monarch who had so recently assumed a tottering throne, Hugh in this letter, as we have pointed out above, revealed considerable daring and self-confidence. He entitled the Byzantine Empire *Imperium Romanus* and his son's potential bride a daughter of the *Sanctum Imperium*, i.e., the Holy Empire; in other words, he applied to Byzantium the titles to which his powerful contemporary Otto III of Germany laid exclusive claim. Gerbert, who is responsible for the wording of Hugh's letter, later, at the very end of the tenth century, became "the inseparable escort" of Otto III,⁵ and at that time in the preface of his treatise *Libellus de rationali et ratione uti*, dedicated to Otto III, he exclaimed: "Ours, ours is the Roman Empire. . . Thou art our Caesar, Emperor of the Romans, and Augustus."⁶ Schramm points out the irony of the fact that the same Gerbert who was then the adviser of Otto III had also drawn up this letter to the Byzantine emperors a few years before.⁷

Hugh gives as his reason for writing the letter to Constantinople the fact that the ties of blood which connected him with the neighboring rulers prevented his finding among them a bride suitable for Robert. It is not out of place to remember that some years earlier, in 972, the Western Emperor Otto I had advanced the same reason for seeking a Byzantine princess of imperial stock for the wife of his son and successor, Otto II.⁸ Without doubt, however, both monarchs in their matrimonial negotiations were primarily influenced by political considerations; both were extremely eager to establish a relationship with the powerful Eastern Empire. A French historian exclaims of Hugh's letter: "What a triumph it would have been for the king of France if the Empire of Constantinople had granted his request as it had once granted that of Germany!"⁹ The granting of Hugh's request by the

⁴ Havet, *op. cit.*, p. 101, n. 3. J. Lair, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-269.

⁵ W. von Giesebrecht, *Geschichte der deutschen Kaiserzeit*, 5th ed., I (Leipzig, 1881), p. 720.)

⁶ Nostrum, nostrum est Romanum Imperium. . . Noster es Caesar, Romanorum imperator et Auguste. Migne, *P. L.*, CXXXIX, p. 159. Havet, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

⁷ P. E. Schramm, "Kaiser, Basileus und Papst in der Zeit der Ottonen," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 3d series, XXXIII (CXXIX), (1923-1924), p. 445. See F. Dvornik, *The Making of Central and Eastern Europe* (London, 1949), pp. 138-139.

⁸ Otto Romanorum imperator augustus, filio suo unice dilecto Ottoni, agnomine Rufo, hisce regionibus nullam tantae copulationi dignam nisi in sua cognatione, cui nequaquam jungi licebat, repperiri non nesciens feminam, Greciam misit. *Annales Magdeburgenses*, MGH, Scriptores, XVI, 152: 972. 37. See I. Moltmann, *Theophano, die Gemahlin Ottos II, in ihrer Bedeutung für die Politik Ottos I. und Ottos II* (Schwerin, 1878), pp. 2-3.

⁹ Ch. Pfister, *Études sur le règne de Robert le Pieux* (Paris, 1885), p. 42.

Eastern Empire would have meant for him the recognition by Constantinople of the legitimacy of his accession to the French throne, which as we know was still questioned by some neighboring feudal lords. Hugh's words "We demand neither your dominions nor your wealth" allude to the offensive policy of Otto I and Otto II against the South Italian possessions of the Empire; and the following statement, "The German will not assail the borders of the Roman Empire," offers a definite guarantee that if an alliance were formed between the two countries danger would be averted from the Empire. As a matter of fact, the statement was sheer exaggeration; Hugh had no power to bring real help to the Empire in any way. But on the basis of this passage some German historians have written that Hugh's ambitions extended beyond the confines of France, and they even go so far as to see here the first attempt at the encirclement of the German *Reich*.¹⁰ The *Gallus* also mentioned in the letter refers to Charles, Duke of Lower Lorraine, who was later successful in his military operations against Hugh Capet and his son and coruler Robert.

Our only source for the negotiation of Hugh Capet with Byzantium is Gerbert's letter. If the letter was really despatched to Constantinople and arrived, the overture of the new French king obtained no result. But surprisingly enough, at the outset of the eighteenth century a French abbot, M. de Camps, in his *Dissertation on the Five Marriages of Robert Surnamed the Pious, King of France*, was evidently inclined to believe that the wedding between Robert and the Byzantine princess had actually taken place. He makes the baseless statement that, although the historians who describe the life of King Robert are silent on the marriage and therefore its performance might be considered doubtful, some sources give indications of its consummation; but in support of this statement he can adduce only the fact of a marriage in 944 between Romanus, son of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and the illegitimate daughter of the king of Italy, Hugh of Provence. This princess, Bertha, in Constantinople was renamed Eudocia.¹¹

¹⁰ Giesebrecht, *op. cit.*, I, p. 648. W. Ohnsorge, *Das Zweikaiserproblem im früheren Mittelalter* (Hildesheim, 1947), p. 107. Schramm, "Kaiser, Basileus und Papst," *Historische Zeitschrift* (1923-1924), p. 445. In his *L'Épopée Byzantine*, G. Schlumberger, dealing with the events of 988, fails to mention our document. See vol. I (Paris, 1896), which ends with the fact of the departure of the Byzantine princess Anna to Russia in 988, as well as vol. II (Paris, 1900), which opens with the story of the marriage of the Russian prince Vladimir to Anna in the same year (988). See A. Vasiliev, *Vizantiskij Vremennik*, V (1898), p. 505.

¹¹ M. de Camps, Abbé de Signy, "Dissertation sur les cinq mariages de Robert, surnommé le Pieux, roy de France," in the French magazine *Le Mercure*, March, 1732, p. 458; the whole article, pp. 446-469; Gerbert's letter, pp. 457-458. On the marriage of Romanus and Bertha-Eudocia, see A. Rambaud, *L'Empire grec au dixième siècle. Constantin Porphyrogénète* (Paris, 1870), p. 311. Steven Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and His Reign* (Cambridge, 1929), pp. 195-196. Cf. Pfister, *op. cit.*, p. 43, n. 2.

For lack of any evidence to be added to the letter, the question has been raised whether or not Hugh's message was actually despatched to Constantinople. The editor of Gerbert's letters, Havet, doubts that it was ever sent to its destination, and thinks it uncertain that Hugh himself was even aware of its existence. Gerbert might have compiled the text independently, in advance, in order to have a text ready to submit to the king for transmittal under the royal name.¹² But it is hard to believe that Hugh knew nothing about the message, and that Gerbert would have composed on his own initiative, without consultation with the king, such an important diplomatic document. Gerbert must have been following royal suggestions and must have been commissioned by his lord to draw up the message.

But Havet may be right in saying that the letter was never sent to Constantinople. Some scholars point out, in support of this point of view, the fact that the letter is missing in one of the manuscripts containing Gerbert's letters, which he himself collected and registered. If this letter was not sent to its destination, it may have been regarded as a mere draft, and therefore excluded from the collection. On the other hand, why did Gerbert include this letter, dealing with a projected alliance between the Eastern Empire and France against Germany, in the edition of his letters which he prepared for Otto III in Rome? Nor is the fact of great importance that the message to Constantinople has left no trace in Byzantine sources, which, particularly in this period, pass in silence over events of much greater moment than Hugh's letter.

Of much greater importance for the elucidation of this question are chronological considerations. As we have pointed out above, this letter was compiled at the beginning of 988, certainly before April 8. We know that in the same year the young Robert, at the age of eighteen (he was born in 970), married Rosala-Suzanne, the elderly widow of the Count of Flanders, Arnulf II, who died at the outset of the same year (988). The union was brief and lasted barely a year. Robert repudiated the "old Italian" widow in the following year, 989, but reserved for himself her dowry, the Chateau de Montreuil.¹³ It is a fact that Robert married Rosala-Suzanne in 988; accord-

¹² Havet, *op. cit.*, p. 102, n. 2. Cf. Lot, *Les derniers Carolingiens*, p. 218. Lot thinks that Havet goes too far in his hypothesis. Lair (*Études critiques*, pp. 267-269) does not accept Havet's hypothesis. In his other study, Lot writes that the reason produced by Havet in support of his theory is of little value. *Études sur le règne de Hugues Capet* (Paris, 1903), p. 4 and n. 2. Bubnov (*op. cit.*, p. 499, note) also takes a stand against Havet's speculations.

¹³ *Richeri Historiarum liber IV*, c. 87: Rotbertus rex cum in 19. aetatis anno iuventutis flore vernaret, Susannam uxorem, genere Italicam, eo quod anus esset, facto divortio repudiavit. Ed. G. Waitz (Hannover, 1877), pp. 168-169. See Pfister, *op. cit.*, p. 1, n. 1; 44; 218. Cf. F. Lot, *Les derniers Carolingiens*, p. 219: Robert's marriage in March 988. But see F. Lot,

ingly there would not have been sufficient time to send the letter to Constantinople and receive an answer. It is impossible to imagine that after despatching the letter Hugh decided to carry out his son's marriage without waiting for an answer from the Bosphorus. This seems conclusive evidence that the letter was never sent, but remained among Gerbert's files.

The modern German historian, Ohnsorge, discussing the West European policy of Manuel I Comnenus (1143–1180), who was absorbed in his delusive dream of restoring the unity of the Empire as heir to Augustus, Constantine, and Justinian, conjectured that Gerbert's letter might have been discovered in the twelfth century in the archives of Constantinople and have given Manuel the idea of a Franco-Byzantine association designed to prevent the political activities of the German *Reich*. But since the message was not sent to Constantinople, Ohnsorge's hypothesis is to be dismissed.¹⁴

The end of Robert's reign gives evidence of relations with Constantinople. Robert commissioned Odalric, Bishop of Orleans, on his way to Jerusalem, to transmit to Emperor Constantine VIII a magnificent sword and a golden sheath adorned with precious stones; in return the emperor sent Robert a piece of the Holy Cross and many silk garments.¹⁵

II. FILIA SANCTI IMPERII

The identity of *filia sancti imperii* requested as Robert's bride is a question not without interest. The phrase is rather vague and its meaning somewhat uncertain. But I am inclined to believe that Hugh and Gerbert meant not merely a princess connected with the imperial family by any, perhaps a remote, degree of kinship, but actually a sister or daughter of the emperors of the ruling dynasty. When Otto I sent Liudprand, Bishop of Cremona, to Constantinople in June, 968, to negotiate for the wedding of a Greek princess with his son Otto II, Liudprand said to the Emperor Nicephorus Phocas: "My master has sent me to you to see if you will give the daughter of the Emperor Romanus and the Empress Theophano to his son, my master the august Emperor Otto."¹ Otto I specifically asked for a daughter of the

Études sur le règne de Hugues Capet, p. 4, n. 2: he rejects his own previous dating, March, 988.

¹⁴ W. Ohnsorge, *Das Zweikaiserproblem*, p. 108.

¹⁵ Rodulfus Glaber, *Historiae*, IV, c. 6. Migne, *P. L.*, CXLII, col. 681. See Pfister, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

¹ Liudprandi Relatio de legatione Constantinopolitana, c. VII: misit me dominus meus ad te, ut, si filiam Romani imperatoris et Theophanae imperatricis domino meo, filio suo, Ottoni imperatori augusto in conjugium tradere volueris . . . *Die Werke Liudprands von Cremona*. 3d ed. by J. Becker (Hannover and Leipzig, 1915), p. 180. *Scriptores rerum germanicarum in usum scholarum*. Liudprandi Opera. In English, *The Works of Liudprand of Cremona*, translated by F. A. Wright (London, 1930), p. 239. I use Wright's translation.

late Romanus II and his wife Theophano, who at that time was the wife of Nicephorus Phocas. The request for the bride for Robert of France should have been for a daughter or sister of Basil or Constantine, the emperors to whom Hugh Capet addressed his letter.

Among the children of Romanus II and Theophano, Byzantine sources name two sons, Basil and Constantine, and only one daughter, Anna, who in 988 went to Russia to become the wife of the Russian prince Vladimir, whose name is always associated with the conversion of Russia to Christianity. The name of Theophano, daughter of Romanus II and sister of Basil, Constantine, and Anna, does not occur in the Byzantine tradition, and as Theophanu or Theophania survives only in the West European chronicles. The relationship of this princess to the imperial family is therefore somewhat doubtful.

The Byzantine tradition of the family of Romanus II is as follows. The chronicler George Cedrenus, who lived under Alexius Comnenus (1081–1118), wrote: "After Romanus' death, his imperial power passed to his sons, Basil and Constantine, together with their mother Theophano, who, two days before his death, bore him a daughter, whom they named Anna."² In another passage the same chronicler says that Basil II was related to the Russian prince Vladimir through his sister Anna.³ Anna's identity is therefore well established.

Another chronicler, John Zonaras, who wrote in the twelfth century, fails to name the children of Romanus II, but makes an important statement that Nicephorus Phocas was said to have been the godfather of Theophano's children.⁴ In another passage Zonaras supplies us with the same information that Cedrenus did in the second quotation given above.⁵

Of course it is impossible to state positively from these quotations that

² Cedrenus, II, p. 345: διαδέχονται δὲ τὴν αὐτοῦ βασιλείαν Βασίλειος καὶ Κωνσταντῖνος οἱ παῖδες αὐτοῦ σὺν Θεοφανοῖ τῇ μητρὶ, τεχθείσης αὐτῷ καὶ θυγατρὸς πρὸ δύο ἡμερῶν τῆς αὐτοῦ τελευτῆς, ἣν Ἄνναν ὠνόμασαν.

³ Cedrenus, II, p. 444: καὶ κηδεστὴν ποιησάμενος τὸν ἄρχοντα τούτων (i.e. Ῥῶς) Βλαδιμηρὸν ἐπὶ τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ἀδελφῇ Ἄννῃ. As is known, in his narration of the period from 811 on, Cedrenus' text is almost identical with that of the chronicler of the second half of the eleventh century, John Scylitzes, whose original Greek manuscript has not yet been published, but whose text has been preserved in an old Latin translation by J. B. Gabius, printed at Venice in 1570. In this translation the above passage runs as follows: "principe Vladimero, sibi cognatione conjuncto ob sororem suam Annam." I have quoted this text from V. Vasilievsky, "On the History of the Years 976–986," *Journal of the Ministry of Public Instruction* (March, 1876), p. 150; reprinted in his *Works*, II, 1 (St. Petersburg, 1909), p. 93 (in Russian).

⁴ Zonaras, XVI, 24, 18: ed. Bonn, III, pp. 499–500: ἐλέγετο γὰρ ἀνάδοχος γενέσθαι ὁ Νικηφόρος τῶν τῆς Θεοφανοῦς παίδων ἐκ τοῦ ἁγίου βαπτίσματος.

⁵ Zonaras, XVII, 7, 10: ed. Bonn, pp. 552–553: κῆδος γὰρ πρὸς Βλαδιμηρὸν τὸν ἄρχοντα τούτων (i.e. Ῥῶς) ἐπὶ Ἄννῃ τῇ ἀδελφῇ αὐτοῦ. K. Uhlig errs in saying that Zonaras (16 c. 23)

Romanus II had only one daughter, Anna, whose name is mentioned in connection with her marriage to the Russian prince. It would be natural to expect, however, that if Theophanu was the daughter of Romanus II her marriage to the Western emperor would also have been recorded in Byzantine sources. No such record is known. It is, however, to be remembered that the Byzantine historians of that period, such as Leo the Deacon or Michael Psellus, fail to mention Anna's marriage. This much is clear: the Byzantine sources give only one daughter of Romanus II, Anna, who was born March 13, 963 and was twenty-six years old when in 988 she became the wife of Vladimir.

Since I myself have come to a conclusion on the origin of Theophanu which diverges from the opinion of some very prominent historians of our day, I wish to enlarge on this debatable question.

The most important reason to dismiss the theory that Theophanu was a daughter of Romanus II is the striking fact that not only are Byzantine sources completely silent as to the existence of such a person, but also West European chroniclers never call Theophanu Romanus' daughter. In the Diploma by which Otto II solemnly announced at Rome his marriage with Theophanu in April, 972, she is described as "the most illustrious niece of the Constantinopolitan Emperor John" (i.e., John Tzimiscēs). John's marriage to Theodora, the sister of Romanus II, meant that the children of Romanus might have been called John's nephews and nieces; but it would certainly be strange not to emphasize clearly Theophanu's relationship to the direct imperial line in a document of such importance as the Diploma announcing Otto's marriage, if indeed such a relationship existed.

Matrimonial negotiations between Otto I and Constantinople passed through two stages. The first stage took place in the time of Nicephorus Phocas (963-969). The original idea of Otto was to secure as bride for his son a daughter of the Emperor Romanus, a step-daughter of Nicephorus Phocas, who, after Romanus' death in 963 married his widow Theophano. This fact is positively recorded by a contemporary chronicler, the monk Adalbert, who continued the Chronicle of Regino Prumiensis, and died in 981. In this Continuation we read that Otto I "sent to Constantinople his envoy, to the Emperor of the Greeks (Nicephorus), for the purpose of marrying his son Otto to Nicephorus' step-daughter, to wit a daughter of the Emperor Romanus."⁶

mentions only the sons of Romanus II. He overlooked this passage. K. Uhlirz, "Ueber die Herkunft der Theophanu, Gemahlin Kaisers Otto II.," *Byz. Zeitschrift*, IV (1895), p. 470. Cf. also *idem*, "Theophanu," *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, 37 (1894), pp. 717-763.

⁶ "Domnus imperator nuntium suum eidem Grecorum imperatori pro conjungenda in matrimonium suo filio regi Ottoni privigna ipsius Nicefori, filia scilicet Romani imperatoris,

The anonymous envoy to Constantinople mentioned in the Continuation must have been the Bishop of Cremona, Liudprand, who in June, 968, was sent by Otto I to Constantinople on the same mission, to conclude a treaty of marriage between the daughter of Romanus II and Otto, the emperor's son. We have a vivid description of this fruitless embassy in Liudprand's well known "Embassy to Constantinople" (*De Legatione Constantinopolitana*). He makes three references to his mission. In the first, which I have already cited above, he explains to Nicephorus Phocas the purpose of his mission: "My master has sent me to you to see if you will give the daughter of the Emperor Romanus and the Empress Theophano to his son, my master the august Emperor Otto."⁷ In the second, Liudprand supplies us with the very important information that the chief chamberlain Basil and other Byzantine dignitaries answered as follows: "It is unheard of that a daughter born in the purple, of an emperor born in the purple, should contract a foreign marriage. Still, great as is your demand, you shall have what you want if you give what is proper: Ravenna, namely, and Rome with all the adjoining territories from thence to our possession."⁸ This arrogant answer and many other annoyances and troubles inspired Liudprand, before leaving Constantinople, to write nineteen lines of verse upon the wall of his "hateful" (*invisae*) home and also upon a wooden table. I reproduce here lines 13–16, which refer to his unsuccessful mission:

For lying Greece had promised to his son (Otto's son)
Her princess as a bride. Ah, would that she
Had not been born nor this land e'er seen me!
And then I should not have endured the spite
Of him (Nicephorus) who now refuses to unite
His stepchild with our prince.⁹

These two contemporary sources, Regino's Continuator and Liudprand, give us for the first and last time the exact information that Otto I wished

Constantinopolim dirigit." *Reginonis Abbatis Prumiensis Chronicon cum Continuatione Treverensi*, ed. F. Kurze (Hannover, 1890), p. 178. SCRG in usum scholarum. On the author of the Continuation see Kurze's *Praefatio*, pp. ix–x. See also M. Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, I (München, 1911), pp. 695–696.

⁷ See above, p. 234, n. 1.

⁸ Inaudita res est, ut porphyrogeniti porphyrogenita, hoc est in purpura nati filia in purpura nata, gentibus misceatur. Verum quia tam excellentem rem petitis, si datis, quod decet, accipietis quod libet: Ravennam scilicet et Romam cum his omnibus continuatis, quae ab his sunt usque ad nos. Relatio, c. XV (p. 184), F. Wright, p. 244.

Nurum promisit Grecia mendax,

Quae nec nata foret nec me venisse doleret,

Nec rabiem, Nicephore, tuam perpendere quirem,

Privignam prohibes qui nato jungere herili.

Relatio, c. LVII (p. 207). Wright, p. 270.

to have as bride to his son a daughter of the Emperor Romanus II and the Empress Theophano. The name of the daughter is not indicated. The answer of Nicephorus Phocas to Otto's demand amounted to a flat rejection; the cession to Constantinople of Ravenna and Rome with the adjoining territories was naturally absolutely unacceptable to the Western Emperor. Liudprand could hardly have invented this condition. The project of the marriage, then, fell into abeyance. After this, in our sources on this marriage, the names of Romanus II and his wife Theophano never occur.

Meanwhile a very important event had taken place in Constantinople. In 969 Nicephorus Phocas was assassinated, and the throne passed to John Tzimiskes, an Armenian, who claimed the imperial title because he had married Theodora, a sister of Romanus II and a daughter of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus. This was his second marriage: his first wife, Maria, a sister of Bardas Sclerus, who had revolted against Basil II, died before he was proclaimed emperor. We do not know whether or not she had any children.¹⁰ Immediately after his coronation, the new emperor declared that he would regard himself merely as the guardian and protector of the young legitimate sovereigns, Basil and Constantine, and as the regent of the Empire. As far as we may judge from our evidence, he scrupulously carried out this promise.

In the spring of 972, another German embassy, headed by Gero, Archbishop of Cologne, reached Constantinople in order to resume the negotiations broken off under Nicephorus for the marriage of the Byzantine princess, daughter of Romanus II, and Otto II. Liudprand may have been a member of this new embassy. This time the negotiations were successful.

Henceforward a certain vagueness appears on this question. As I have pointed out, Romanus II is never named as the father of the bride in any sources after the time of John Tzimiskes' elevation to the throne. The question has been raised whether the bride John Tzimiskes sent to Italy was the real daughter of Romanus II, named Theophanu, or merely a relative of the same name not linked with the imperial line. A contemporary of Otto I, the Saxon historian Widukind, calls the Byzantine bride merely *puella*, with no other qualification.¹¹ It would have been strange if Otto's contemporary were not aware of the imperial origin of the bride whom he dismissed by so

¹⁰ Leo Diaconus, VI, 11: Bonn, p. 107; VII, 3: Bonn, p. 117. See Du Cange, *Familiae ac Stemmata Imperatorum*, p. 153.

¹¹ Widukindi Rerum Gestarum Saxonicarum Libri tres, III, 71: (Otto) partem exercitus cum plerisque principalibus viris direxit ad conductum locum, quo eis secus sponsionem legatorum puella traderetur et cum honore filio adduceretur; III, 73: (John Tzimiskes) puellam cum magno exercitu et claris muneribus ad imperatorem destinavit. 3d ed. by G. Waitz (Hannover, 1882), pp. 84; 85. SRG in usum scholarum.

casual an epithet. From Widukind, the word *puella* passed into the Chronicle of Benedict, a monk of the monastery of St. Andrew on Soracte, which was compiled about 968, and which Manitius calls "a real monstrosity" in content as well as form.¹² Another contemporary source exists independent of Widukind, the *Vita* of the Empress Matilda, widow of the Emperor Henry I the Fowler (919–936), who died in 968 during the reign of Otto II. Otto ordered the compiler of the *Vita* to write a true life of his ancestors without rhetorical embellishments.¹³ And in this *Vita* we read that from Greece, from the imperial palace, came the imperial bride named Theophanu, with innumerable wealth.¹⁴

Passing to the most important official document of the period, the Diploma of April 14, 972, issued at Rome, which formally announced the marriage of Otto II to Theophanu, we read there that Theophanu was a niece of the Constantinopolitan Emperor Johannes (i.e., John Tzimiskes).¹⁵ On the basis of this official document we may conclude that the bride of Otto II described as the niece of John Tzimiskes was the daughter of Romanus II, because after John's marriage to the sister of Romanus, Theodora, Romanus' children automatically became John's nephews and nieces. For some reason or other, the name of Theophanu's father, Romanus, is not mentioned in our West-European evidence; and likewise, as we know, Theophanu is not given as Romanus' daughter in Byzantine sources. The record of Widukind, who rather surprisingly calls the imperial bride by the simple term *puella*, does not contradict our conclusion.

Apparently at that time in Germany a rumor was current that the Byzantine bride who had come to Italy was not the person desired by Otto I for his son, but another woman substituted by John Tzimiskes for the actual daughter of Romanus II. In this connection, a record of the German chronicler Thietmar, Bishop of Merseburg, who died in 1018, is very interesting.

¹² *Benedicti Chronicon*: (imperator Graecorum) gaudebundus effectus, aurum et argentum infinitum cum puella transmiserunt in terra Romania . . . secundum Graecorum lingua Pyphanu vocitabatur. MGSS, III, pp. 718–719. See Manitius, *op. cit.*, II (1923), pp. 179–181. Potthast, *Bibliotheca Historica Medii Aevi*, I, 1 (Berlin, 1895), p. 144: written about 1000.

¹³ Prologus in *Vita antiquior Mathildis reginae*: Ottonis imperatoris jussu, non philosophando sed vera dicendo laudabilem dignissimorum sui vitam parentum . . . perscripsimus. Migne, *P. L.*, CLI, col. 1313.

¹⁴ de partibus Graeciae, augusti de palatio, regalis fuisset data conjux praeclara dicta nomine Theophanu cum innumeris thesaurorum divitiis. MGSS, X, p. 581; Migne, *P. L.*, CLI, col. 1326.

¹⁵ Theophanu, Johannis Constantinopolitani imperatoris neptim clarissimam, in maxima Romulea urbe . . . conjugem decrevi assumere. MGH. *Diplomatum regum et imperatorum Germaniae* tom. II pars prior. Ottonis II. *Diplomata* (Hannover, 1888), no. 21 (p. 29). In this Diploma, the name of Theophanu is mentioned twice more as "sanctissima et delectissima Theophanu sponsa nostra" (p. 29) and as "sponsa nostra dilectissima Theophanu" (p. 30).

Thietmar made use of Windukind's chronicle, not reproducing it exactly, but adding the new information that the bride who arrived was not "the desired girl," but a niece of John Tzimiskes called Theophanu; and that on this account there were some who tried, though unsuccessfully, to prevent the emperor from agreeing to the marriage.¹⁶ This text was the chief basis on which J. Moltmann rejected the theory that Theophanu was a daughter of Romanus II. To Moltmann's question whether Thietmar fabricated his record out of whole cloth, I may answer: he did not. He simply recorded in his chronicle rumors which were evidently circulating at the time in Germany.¹⁷ The cause of the rumors and of Thietmar's own error was a misunderstanding of the bride's position as a niece (*neptis*) of John Tzimiskes. Those who spread the rumor did not realize that Tzimiskes' niece was also Romanus' daughter, the same princess whose hand, we know, had been demanded without success by Otto I under Nicephorus Phocas.¹⁸

Some confirmation of the imperial origin of Theophanu may be found in several chronicles of the eleventh and following centuries, where she is called a daughter of the emperor of Greece, or a Greek daughter of the Constantinopolitan emperor, although Romanus' name is not given.¹⁹ Some later chronicles, following earlier tradition, call her "a niece of the Constantinopolitan Emperor Johannes Tzimiskes,"²⁰ or an illustrious Greek, Theo-

¹⁶ Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon, II, 15: (John Tzimiskes) non virginem desideratam, sed neptem suam, Theophanu vocatam, imperatori nostro trans mare mittens . . . Fuere nonnulli qui hanc fieri conjunctionem apud imperatorem inpedire studerent, eandemque remitti consulerent. Quos idem non audivit. Ed. by F. Kurze (Hannover, 1889), p. 27. SRG ad usum scholarum.

¹⁷ J. Moltmann, *Theophano, die Gemahlin Ottos II., in ihrer Bedeutung für die Politik Ottos I. und Ottos II.* (Schwerin, 1878), pp. 12-13.

¹⁸ A few months after the appearance of Moltmann's dissertation (in 1878), the great Leopold Ranke in his *Weltgeschichte* devoted a lengthy note to this question. He does not mention Moltmann's study, but he criticizes Thietmar's record and advocates the theory that Theophano was Romanus' daughter; he then qualifies Thietmar's whole record as fabulous (*fabelhaft*). I think Thietmar hardly deserves such a severe judgment from the celebrated German historian. Leopold von Ranke, *Weltgeschichte*, 4th ed., VI, 2 (Leipzig, 1891), p. 265, n. 1. See also K. Uhlirz, "Ueber die Herkunft der Theophanu, Gemahlin Kaisers Otto II.," *Byz. Zeitsch.*, IV (1895), p. 467.

¹⁹ *Annales Altahenses Majores* (XI century): filia imperatoris de Graecia. SRG in usum scholarum (Hannover, 1890), p. 11 (year 972). *Chronicon Novaliciense* (XI century): quaedam Greca filia Constantinopolitani imperatoris. MGSS, VII, p. 127 (15). Sigberti Gemblacensis (d. 1112) *Vita Deoderici I*: Theophanu filia imperatoris Constantinopolitani. MGSS, IV, p. 470 (year 972). *Annales Edmundenses*: Theophanu filia regis Gretie. O. Oppermann, *Fontes Edmundenses* (Utrecht, 1933), p. 126. *Annales Weissenburgenses*: filia imperatoris de Grecia. MGSS, III, p. 63; also SGH, in usum scholarum, in the volume *Lamperti Monachi Hersfeldensis Opera*, ed. O. Holder-Egger (Hannover and Leipzig, 1894), p. 41.

²⁰ *Annales Casinates*: neptem Johanni Constantinopolitano imperatori qui cognominatus est Cimiski (year 969). MGSS, III, p. 172. *Annales Uticensis*: (Johannis) neptis Theophanu (year 979). MGSS, XXVI, p. 498.

phanu, closely related to the imperial line.²¹ One document compiled in the second half of the eleventh century even calls Theophanu a daughter of the Emperor of the Greeks Johannes.²² The chronicler Lampert (end of the eleventh century) simply says that Theophanu was sent by the emperor from Greece.²³

I shall mention here in passing a very remarkable record found in the later version of the *Vita* of Gregory, founder and first abbot of the monastery of Burtscheid in Rhineland (Germany) at the very end of the tenth century. According to this *Vita*, Gregory was the brother of Theophania, "whom some call Theophanu."²⁴ Several writers take this fantastic information for actual fact.²⁵

As was to be expected, historians, beginning with Du Cange, are divided into two groups: one believing that Theophanu was Romanus' daughter, and the other rejecting this point of view and calling her, sometimes rather vaguely, "a Greek princess." Both points of view have many adherents.

To the first group belongs, first of all, Du Cange himself, who wrote in 1680 that Theophanu was the daughter of Romanus II and the sister of Basil and Constantine, and that "in an old chronicle (she) is also called Stephana."²⁶ Among many other historians holding this opinion, I mention here three recent scholars: H. Moritz in 1939; J. Calmette in 1946; L. Bréhier in 1947-1949.²⁷

²¹ *Annales Magdaburgenses: Greca illustris imperatoriae stirpi proxima. . . Theophanu nomine* (year 972. 37). MGSS, XVI, p. 152. *Gesta Archiepiscoporum Magdeburgensium: Theophania videlicet Greca imperatrice*. MGSS, XIV, pp. 389-390.

²² *Brunwilarensis Monasterii Fundatorum Actus: filia Iohannis Grecorum regis Theophanu nomine; in another place: Johannes imperatricis Theophanu pater*. MGSS, XIV, pp. 127; 128.

²³ *Lamperti Annales. Lamperti Monachi Hersfeldensis Opera*, ed. by O. Holder-Egger. SGH, in usum scholarum (Hannover and Leipzig, 1894), p. 40: *missa est Theophanu* (one manuscript gives *Theophania*) *ab imperatore de Grecia*.

²⁴ *Vita Gregorii Abbatis Porcetensis Posterior: germanam beati viri Gregorii Theophaniam dominam, quam quidam Theophanu nuncupant, ex Grecia filiam regis Constantinopolitani*. MGSS, XV, 2, p. 1195 (14).

²⁵ This fable is told in detail by Christian Quix, *Geschichte der ehemaligen Reichs-Abtei Burtscheid* (Aachen, 1834). I have not seen this book; but from other writers I know that the author takes Gregory for the son of Nicephorus Phocas and the brother-in-law of Otto II. The fact of the relationship between Theophanu and Gregory on the basis of Quix's book has been accepted, among others, by E. A. Weerth, *Kunstdenkmäler des christlichen Mittelalters in den Rheinlanden*, II (Leipzig, 1860), p. 139 (Burtscheidt); by Eug. Müntz, "Les artistes byzantins dans l'Europe latine," *Revue de l'art chrétien*, 1893, p. 184. See also K. Uhlirz, "Ueber die Herkunft der Theophanu, Gemahlin Kaisers Otto II," *Byz. Zeitsch.*, IV (1895), p. 470, n. 1.

²⁶ *Theophano, quae et Stephana appellatur in veteri Chronico* (Lamber. lib. 2. Bibl. Cas., p. 394). C. du Fresne du Cange, *Historia byzantina duplici commentario illustrata. I. Familiae ac Stemmata Imperatorum* (Paris, 1680), p. 143. I cannot identify the "old chronicle" mentioned by Du Cange.

²⁷ H. Moritz, "Die Herkunft der Theophanu, der Gemahlin des Kaisers Otto II," *Byz. Zeitsch.*, XXXIX (1939), pp. 387-392. J. Calmette, *Le monde féodal*, new corrected edition

The real founder of the second group was J. Moltmann, who in 1878, as we have pointed out above, published a very interesting dissertation flatly denying Theophanu's relationship to the family of Romanus II. He called Theophano the niece of John Tzimisces but not the daughter of Romanus II or the sister of Basil II and Constantine VIII.²⁸ The strongest supporters of this theory today are P. E. Schramm, who in 1923–1924 declared it out of the question for Theophanu to be Romanus' daughter, and G. Ostrogorsky, who in 1930 wrote that Theophano was not a princess born in the purple but, as indisputably proved, a niece of Tzimisces, and concluded his statement thus: "In the end the German Emperor did not receive a princess born in the purple."²⁹ Several historians refer to Theophanu merely as "the Greek, Theophania," or "a Greek princess" or "a Byzantine princess."³⁰

In 1943, Mathilde Uhlirz made an attempt to solve the question of Theophanu's origin in a different way.³¹ The author is the daughter of the above-mentioned K. Uhlirz, who, as we know, belonged to the group of scholars who held the opinion that Theophanu was the daughter of the Emperor Romanus II. His daughter, Mathilde Uhlirz, disagreeing with her father's point of view, turns to the family of the Emperor Romanus I Lecapenus (919–944) and, for confirmation of her hypothesis, refers to a Bolognese chronicle of the fifteenth century, which has never been considered in this particular respect, and in which we read the following passage: "Hic (i.e., Otto I), pacata Italia, cum uxore sua Longobardia in Sassoniam rediit, de qua filium genuit tam regni quam moris successorem. Cui etiam filiam

(Paris, 1946), p. 82, 127. L. Bréhier, *Le monde Byzantin*. I. *Vie et mort de Byzance* (Paris, 1947), p. 186, 211; II. *Les institutions de l'Empire Byzantin* (Paris, 1949), p. 39, 299. Among the historians of earlier date holding this opinion, see K. Uhlirz, "Ueber die Herkunft der Theophanu, Gemahlin Kaisers Otto II.," *Byz. Zeitsch.*, IV (1895), pp. 467–477. *Idem*, *Jahrbücher des Deutschen Reiches unter Otto II. und Otto III.*, Erster Band: Otto II. 973–983 (Leipzig, 1902), p. 24.

²⁸ J. Moltmann, *Theophanu, die Gemahlin Ottos II., in ihrer Bedeutung für die Politik Ottos I. und Ottos II.* (Schwerin, 1878), especially pp. 12–20.

²⁹ P. E. Schramm, "Kaiser, Basileus und Papst in der Zeit der Ottonen," *Historische Zeitschrift*, CXXIX (1923–1924), p. 431; the whole article, pp. 424–475. *Idem*, *Kaiser, Rom und Renovatio*, I (Leipzig, 1929), p. 83. G. Ostrogorsky, "Vladimir the Saint and Byzantium," *Vladimirsky Sbornik*, 988–1938 (Belgrad, 1939), p. 36 (in Russian). *Idem*, *Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates* (München, 1940), p. 209: a niece of Tzimisces.

³⁰ See, for instance, Ch. Pfister, *Études sur le règne de Robert le Pieux* (Paris, 1885), p. 42. N. Bubnov, *The Letters of Gerbert as an Historical Source*, II (St. Petersburg, 1890), p. 494; cf. p. 496, n. 4; here he follows Moltmann (in Russian). Most recently, F. Dvornik, *The Making of Central and Eastern Europe* (London, 1949), p. 175.

³¹ Uhlirz, Mathilde, "Studien über Theophanu," *Deutsches Archiv für Geschichte des Mittelalters*, VI (Weimar, 1943), pp. 442–462.

imperatoris Constantinopolis de Romano sanguine procreatam in conjugem dedit." ³²

Miss Uhlirz, although realizing that the interpretation of the words "de Romano sanguine" as "from the family of Romanus" (*aus dem Geschlechte des Romanos*), is questionable, still concludes that the least that we may state on the basis of this passage is that at Bologna, in the fifteenth century, the tradition of Theophano's connection with the house of Romanus Lecapenus was still current. Then she writes, "The Empress Theophano is without doubt a Lecapene" (p. 459). And Miss Uhlirz's final conclusion is that in all probability Theophano was the daughter of the Emperor Stephen, one of Romanus Lecapenus' sons, and of his wife Anna, who was crowned Augusta. She was neither daughter nor sister of Romanus II, nor a noble Armenian woman related to John Tzimisce nor born in the purple (pp. 459-461).

Miss Uhlirz's hypothesis is absolutely inadmissible. The words "de Romano sanguine" mean nothing but "of Roman blood," i.e., "of Greek blood," in other words, of Byzantine origin. The fate of the Emperor Stephen Lecapenus, who was deposed and exiled at the beginning of 945 and lived on in exile for nineteen years, gives no material whatever to confirm Miss Uhlirz's hypothesis. ³³

Finally, in 1949, in his article, "Who was Theophano?," Franz Dölger, after a critical discussion of the previous studies on this question, rejects Miss Uhlirz's thesis justly, stating that the words "de Romano sanguine" can mean nothing but "rhomäischer d. h. griechischer Herkunft," and concludes his article saying that we must admit that Theophano, as Moltmann had already shown seventy years ago, was a niece (or grandniece) of the Byzantine Emperor John I Tzimisce, whose parents we do not know. ³⁴

Turning to the above-mentioned *Vita* of Gregory, founder and first abbot of the monastery of Burtscheid in Rhineland (see notes 24 and 25), I wish to point out that Mathilde Uhlirz and Franz Dölger try to produce some historical interpretation of this puzzling information. Miss Uhlirz erroneously recognizes in the names of Gregory's parents, Licastos and Anna, those of Stephen Lecapenus, in the distorted form of Licastos, and his wife Anna,

³² *Corpus Chronicorum Bononensium*, a cura di Albano Sorbelli. Rerum italicarum scriptores. Raccolta degli storici italiani ordinata da L. A. Muratori. Nuova edizione riveduta ampliata e corretta con la direzione di G. Carducci e V. Fiorini. Tomo XVIII, Parte I, fasc. 5. (Città di Castello, 1909), p. 436.

³³ On Stephen Lecapenus, see Steven Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and His Reign* (Cambridge, 1929), pp. 234, 236.

³⁴ Franz Dölger, "Wer war Theophano?," *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 62/9 (1949), pp. 646-658.

"whom in all probability, we may designate as the parents of the Empress Theophano."³⁵ Dölger thinks that in the passage of Gregory's *Vita posterior* in which we read that he was the brother of Theophania, "whom some call Theophanu," we must understand the word "brother" as the spiritual brother who has nothing to do with actual relationship.³⁶

As we have noted above, Theophano does not appear by name among the children of Romanus II. But in one Byzantine source there is an indication that he had at least one child born before Basil, the future Emperor Basil II. This source is the official description of the reception of the Russian Princess Olga in the imperial palace in Constantinople on Wednesday, September 9, 957, which has been preserved in the Ceremonial Book of Constantine Porphyrogenitus. Among many others who attended the ceremony, the document lists the Emperor (i.e., Constantine Porphyrogenitus), the Porphyrogenitus Emperor Romanus (i.e., the future Emperor Romanus II, his son), *their* children born in the purple, the Emperor's daughter-in-law (i.e., Romanus' wife Theophano), and the princess herself (i.e., Olga).³⁷ Among the children of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and Romanus who are mentioned in the document, one at least must have belonged to Romanus, and must have been born before Basil in 958 and his subsequent children, Constantine (VIII), born in 961, and his daughter Anna, born March 13, 963. In 957, when the reception for Olga was held, Romanus already had a child, whether boy or girl, who was seated (*ἐκαθέσθη*) during the ceremony. Ostrogorsky is aware of this source. But since he believes that Theophanu was not a daughter of Romanus II, he surmises that this child, never mentioned afterwards, died prematurely, leaving no trace in our historical evidence.³⁸ On the other hand, my opinion is that Theophano or Theophanu was a daughter of Romanus II, and I believe we may find corroborating evidence for that opinion in the fact that this document gives the indication of the existence of an older child of Romanus II of unspecified sex. The name Theophano has not survived in Byzantine sources but has been preserved in the West European chronicles.³⁹ If this child who at-

³⁵ M. Uhlirz, *op. cit.*, pp. 462-474; especially pp. 473-474.

³⁶ It would be out of place to enter in detail into Dölger's interesting but rather complicated speculations on this question. See Dölger, *op. cit.*, pp. 657-658. On some correction and addition to his article suggested by R. J. H. Jenkins (London), see F. Dölger, "Nochmals: Wer war Theophano?," *Byz. Zeitsch.*, XLIII (1950), pp. 338-339.

³⁷ Constantini Porphyrogeniti De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae, II, 15; Bonn, I, p. 597: *καὶ ἐκαθέσθη ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ Ῥωμανὸς ὁ Πορφυρογέννητος βασιλεὺς καὶ τὰ πορφυρογέννητα τούτων τέκνα καὶ ἡ νύμφη καὶ ἡ ἀρχόντισσα . . .*

³⁸ Ostrogorsky, *op. cit.*, Vladimirsky Sbornik (Belgrad, 1939), p. 36, n. 1 (in Russian).

³⁹ On the date of Basil's birth see Theophanis Continuatus, p. 469. Symeon Magister, p. 757. On the birth of Anna, Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, p. 345. See E. de Murtal, *Essai de chrono-*

tended the reception in 957 was a girl and was then about seven, she would have been about twenty-two and of marriageable age in 972, the date of the wedding of Theophanu and Otto II. I mention here in passing that two of the sisters of Romanus II were named Theophano and Anna.⁴⁰ In other words, the name Theophano was popular in the family of Romanus II.

At the beginning of 988, when Hugh Capet's message was compiled, Anna, the daughter of Romanus II and Theophano, was still eligible for marriage; a few months later she went to Russia to be married. If Hugh Capet and Gerbert were really well informed on the family situation of Romanus and Theophano, they must have been considering as a possible bride for Robert, Anna, whom they called in their message *Filia Sancti Imperii*. As we have noted above, in 988 Anna was twenty-six years of age. If the authors of the message were well acquainted with the political situation of the Byzantine Empire in 988, they may have realized that this year was not appropriate for matrimonial negotiations and therefore abandoned their project. It was at this time that two leaders of the most powerful families of Asia Minor, Bardas Phocas and Bardas Sclerus, rebelled against Basil II and nearly deprived him of his throne. Only the intervention of the Russian auxiliary corps sent by Prince Vladimir saved the situation and prevented the fall of the emperor. For this help, Vladimir received Anna's hand.

Let us turn now to the children of Constantine VIII. He had three daughters: Eudocia, Zoë, and Theodora. The two latter were too young (Zoë was born about 980) to be considered for marriage at this time. But the name of Eudocia has occasionally been mentioned in connection with Hugh Capet's message. Du Cange expressed uncertainty whether or not Eudocia was the person whom Hugh Capet is said to have requested for his son Robert's wife. The editor of Gerbert's letters, Havet (in 1889), remarked in passing: ". . . probably Eudocia, the elder daughter of Constantine VIII." Bubnov (in 1890) and Lair (in 1899) repeated Havet's remark.⁴¹ As

graphie byzantine, I (St. Petersburg, 1855), p. 529. Cf. G. Schlumberger, *L'épopée byzantine*, I (Paris, 1896), p. 328. Surprisingly, he says that we do not know the exact year of Basil's birth.

⁴⁰ Theoph. Contin., p. 471. Symeon Magister, p. 757.

⁴¹ C. du Fresne du Cange, *Historia Byzantina duplici commentario illustrata*. I. *Familiae ac stemmata Imperatorum* (Paris, 1680), pp. 144-145. Havet, *op. cit.*, p. 102, n. 2. Bubnov, *op. cit.*, II, p. 498, n. 7. Lair, *Études critiques*, p. 267. Eudocia died unmarried in a convent before 1042. On Eudocia, see Michael Psellus, *Chronographia*. Constantine VIII, ed. C. Sathas. *Bibliotheca Medii Aevi*, IV (Paris, 1874), p. 26; ed. E. Renauld, I (Paris, 1926), p. 28. See Schlumberger, *L'Épopée Byzantine*, III (Paris, 1905), p. 54.

far as we know, Basil II was unmarried; so no question arises about any daughter of his.

III. THE PRINCESS LIUTGARD

In L. Bréhier's recent work, *The Institutions of the Byzantine Empire*, I have come across the following statement: "Of the three daughters of Romanus II, Theophano married in 972 the Emperor Otto II, Anna in 989 became the wife of Vladimir, 'the Russian Clovis,' and the third married a Count of Holland." In his discussion of the two very well-known marriages of Theophano-Theophanu and Anna, Bréhier refers to volume one of G. Schlumberger's *L'épopée byzantine*; but for the third daughter, whose name is not indicated, he gives no reference whatever. In another passage in the same work, Bréhier writes: "Let us remember the marriages of Theophano, a daughter of Romanus II, to Otto II; of Anna, her sister, to the Grand Duke of Russia Vladimir, the historical consequences of which were considerable." In this passage the third sister is not mentioned.¹ A possibility then arises: if such a third sister really existed, she may have been the person whom Hugh Capet and Gerbert had in view in their message.

Bréhier's information on the unnamed third sister is a little surprising, particularly in the decisive tone of his statement, which, although it is not substantiated by any source, he gives as if it were well established historical fact. I do not know exactly what source of information Bréhier has for his statement. I am myself aware that Du Cange in his genealogical investigations on the children of Romanus II lists two brothers, Basil and Constantine, and three sisters, Theophano, Anna, and Luithgarda. Of the third he writes: "Luithgarda, a sister of the Augusta Theophano, was given by the Emperor Otto II as wife to the Dutch Count Arnulf, son of the Count Theodoric II, if any credit is to be given the Dutch writers; such credit, in this case, must certainly be regarded as slight, because older sources give no testimony as to the relationship of this Luithgarda and Theophano."² Du Cange in these comments on the third daughter of Romanus II, whom he calls Luithgarda, is much more cautious and circumspect than Bréhier. Instead of giving a positive statement like the latter, Du Cange mentions the

¹ L. Bréhier, *Le Monde Byzantin. II. Les institutions de l'Empire Byzantin* (Paris, 1949), p. 39, 299.

² C. du Fresne Du Cange, *Historia Byzantina duplici commentario illustrata. I. Familiae ac stemmata Imperatorum* (Paris, 1680), p. 144: Luithgarda, Theophanonis Augustae soror, Arnulpho Hollandiae Comiti, Theoderici II. Comitis filio, ab Ottone II. Imperatore uxor data est, si qua fides habenda scriptoribus Hollandicis, quae in hac re sublaesta prorsus haberi debet, cum nullum de hacce Luithgardae cum Theophanone affinitate testimonium extet apud antiquiores. In the margin, Du Cange gives some references in a very abbreviated form to Dutch sources.

name of the third daughter but expresses doubts of her relationship to Theophano. Bréhier apparently did not make use of Du Cange's record.

I am greatly indebted for the following material to J. F. Niermeyer, Professor of Mediaeval History, in the University of Amsterdam, whom I approached through the agency of my old friend, Professor B. Becker, of the same university. Professor Niermeyer generously supplied me with a rich store of information on the sources for the life of Luithgarda, more commonly Liutgard (Liudgard), and her relationship to the family of Romanus II, as treated in mediaeval Dutch tradition, and kindly permitted me to make use of it for this study. I take the opportunity here of expressing my deep gratitude to Professor Niermeyer for his friendly gesture of scholarly coöperation.

Liutgard was the wife of Arnulf, Count of Holland, who died in a battle against the Frisians in the northern part of the actual province of North Holland in 993. He was one of the family called Counts of Holland. His father, Theodoric (Dietrich), Count of Holland, died in 988. This family was in high favor with both the Emperor Otto II and his wife Theophanu. Arnulf's younger brother, Egbert, was appointed chancellor of the empire in 976 and archbishop of Treves in 977. In 985 Theophanu, at that time a widow — Otto II died in 983 — granted Theodoric the vast possessions in the district of the Meuse and in the Friesland (Frisia) which laid the real foundation for the County of Holland.³

The story of Liutgard has passed through two stages: legend and reality.

The first trace of the story occurs in the so-called *Gravenregister*, a short chronicle dealing with the Counts of Holland. Its recent editor, O. Oppermann, argues that the text of the chronicle, preserved in manuscripts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was compiled late in the twelfth century in a somewhat arbitrary way. One source used for its composition was an older text from the Abbey of Egmond, the so-called *Evangelie-aantekeningen*, i.e., notes preserved in the Gospelbook. This text mentions a gift to the abbey made by "Arnulf with his legitimate wife Ludgarda."⁴ As we see, this old note gives no information on Liutgard's origin.

³ See H. Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique*. I. Des origines au commencement du XIV^e siècle. 3d ed. (Bruxelles, 1909), p. 129; also p. 436 (chronology of the Counts of Holland). Theodoricus is the Latin form of the name Dietrich; there is also a shortened form, Dirk. K. Th. Wenzelburger, *Geschichte der Niederlande*, I (Gotha, 1879), pp. 106–107.

⁴ *Fontes Egmundenses* uitgegeven door O. Oppermann (Utrecht, 1933), p. 63: *Notum sit etiam cunctis nunc natis atque iam nascituris domnum Arnulfum cum sua legali coniuge Ludgarda hec tradere ad predictum scilicet locum Egmondum*. See introduction, p. 36*: the original text of these notes belongs to the tenth or the eleventh century; the text we have is not the original one. The gift is also referred to in the *Gravenregister*, *ibidem*, p. 69: (Arnulf and Liutgarda) *offerentes et ipsi ad predictum locum Egmundensem*.

But elsewhere in the *Gravenregister*, there occurs a passage from which for the first time we learn that Liutgard was a sister of the Empress Theophano. "The Count Arnulf, Egbert's brother, according to his nobility, received a wife worthy of himself, Liutgard, a sister of the Empress Theophano, the mother of the Emperor Otto,"⁵ i.e., Otto III. Also in the necrology of the Abbey of Egmond, which was compiled about 1205, we have the following record under the year 993: "The Count Arnulf was killed in war and buried in the monastery of Egmond. Luitgard, his wife, a daughter of an emperor of the Greeks, died on May 14."⁶

In the same century, the unreliable Egmond chronicle, compiled about 1250, whose data on the end of the tenth century was taken almost word for word from the above mentioned *Gravenregister*, supplies us with the following record: "Arnulf, a son of the Count of Holland, Theodoric II, legally married Luitgard, a sister of the Empress Theophana, mother of the Emperor Otto III, in the presence of the Emperor Otto (II), who was married to this Theophana, a daughter of the Emperor of Greece Theophanius (!)."⁷ This version, based on the two preceding sources, is repeated by the canon of Utrecht, Johannes de Beka, about 1350 in his *Chronicle of the Bishops of Utrecht*. He wrote: "After the death of the Count Theodoric, Arnulf, the third Count of Holland, married Lutgard, a daughter of the powerful emperor of the Greeks, Theophanes, and a sister of the empress of the Romans, Theophane."⁸ From this chronicle all the later histories of Holland are derived, like that of Johannes a Leydis and others; the story accordingly passed from Beka into the later historical tradition of Holland.

⁵ Arnulfus comes frater eiusdem Ekberti secundum suam nobilitatem accepit condignam sibi uxorem Liutgardam, sororem Theophane imperatricis matris Ottonis imperatoris. *Fontes Egmundenses*, p. 69.

⁶ Arnulfus comes peremptus est in bello, sepultus in Egmundensi monasterio. Lutgairdis uxor ejus filia regis Grecorum obiit pridie ydus Maii. *Fontes Egmundenses*, p. 106.

⁷ Arnulfus filius Theoderici secundi comitis Hollandiae Lutgardam sororem Theophanae imperatricis, matris Ottonis imperatoris tertii, coram Ottone rege, (qui) eandem Theophanam, Theophanii regis Grecie filiam, uxorem habebat, legaliter desponsavit. *Historia critica Comitatus Hollandiae et Zeelandiae ab antiquissimis inde deducta temporibus*, vol. I, part I, sistens *Chronicon Hollandie vetustissimum Anonymi Monachi Egmondani ab anno DCXLVII ad annum MCCV*, auctore Adriano Kluit (*Mediobergae*, 1777), pp. 33–34. See O. Oppermann, *Untersuchungen zur nordniederländischen Geschichte des 10. bis 13. Jahrhunderts*. I. *Die Egmonder Fälschungen* (Utrecht, 1920), p. 166; 169. The words *Theophanii regis Grecie* may be explained as a distorted form of the name Theophanu; the compiler took the single last letter *u* for two letters *ii*. See A. Kluit, *op. cit.*, p. 34, n. 7.

⁸ Post obitum Theoderici comitis Arnulfus tertius comes Hollandiae effectus duxit in uxorem Lutgardim filiam Theophani magnipotentis imperatoris Grecorum et sororem Theophane imperatricis Romanorum. Johannes de Beka, *Chronicon episcoporum Traiectensium*, ed. by A. Buchelius (Utrecht, 1643), p. 35.

The texts mentioned above clearly have no individual value; they depend one on another, repeating the same story, slightly changing and even distorting it. This chain of records on our subject goes back to the *Graven-register*, preserved among other documents at the monastery of Egmond. This text is, then, the only source from which the story comes. The materials from this monastery are not very reliable. A Dutch scholar who has made a special study of them, O. Oppermann, gave one of his books the subtitle *The Egmondian Forgeries* (*Die Egmonder Fälschungen*).

Let us turn to the factual side of the story. First of all, the name of the princess itself, Luitgard (Liutgarda, Lutgairdis, Lutgarda, Lutgardis, Liudgarda, Luitgarde, Liutgard, Liudgard), is a genuine German name which has no connection whatever with any Byzantine name. Next, it is impossible to admit that a simple Count of Holland would have been honored by receiving a bride of the imperial Byzantine line, in this case a sister of Theophanu. Since the story comes originally from the Egmond monastery, some tradition of Liutgard's connection with the Empire must have existed there. She herself was buried there; perhaps, as Professor Niermeyer suggests, she may have been called on her tomb *soror imperatricis*. In the monasterial archives lay the famous charter which laid the real foundation for the County of Holland, the Diploma of Otto III dated August 25, 985. This diploma was given Count Theodoric (Dietrich) II "through the wish and love of our beloved mother Theophana, the august empress, and through the mediation of the venerable archbishop of the church of Treves, Ekbert."⁹ Theophanu's special interest in the County of Holland, whose ruler at that time was Theodoric (Dietrich) II, may also have had some influence on the origin of the story, because as we know Liutgard was the wife of one of his sons, Arnulf; and the theory may have been advanced that the important Diploma was a special mark of favor to Liutgard, daughter-in-law of Theodoric II, and that therefore there was a connection between Theophanu and Liutgard.

For further clarification of the story, the chronicler of the twelfth century, Thietmar of Merseburg, is important. Speaking of a military expedition undertaken by King Henry II (1002-1024) against the Frisians, he writes: "The king assailing with a rival force constrained the Frisians to stop their arrogance and (by this fact) satisfied the eager desire of the sister of the

⁹ . . . ob votum et amorem dilecte genetricis nostre Theophane videlicet imperatricis auguste necnon et interventu Ekberti Treverensis ecclesie venerabilis archiepiscopi. MGH. Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae. II, Ottonis II. et III. Diplomata (Hannover, 1893). II, Pars posterior. Ottonis III. Diplomata, no. 19 (pp. 417-418). O. Oppermann, *Fontes Egmundenses*, p. 218.

empress, Liutgard.”¹⁰ As we know, Liutgard’s husband Arnulf fell in battle against the Frisians. Finally, in the *Life of the Emperor Henry II by Adalbert* we have the following decisive entry: “On the thirteenth of May, the Countess Liukart, a sister of the Empress Kunigunde, died.”¹¹

The first doubt of the authenticity of the story was expressed in 1643 by A. Buchelius in a note to his edition of the chronicle of Johannes de Beka (p. 35). Later in 1777, in note 5 to p. 33 of his edition of the Egmond Chronicle given above, A. Kluit correctly remarked: “Factually Arnulf had as wife Lutgardin, a sister of the empress, *id est* of the wife of the emperor. But this emperor was not Otto but Henry; and the empress was the latter’s wife Cunigunda.” In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the early story has been definitely regarded as an historical error, and Liudgard has been justly recognized as a sister of the Empress Kunigunde, wife of Henry II.¹² Surprisingly enough, in spite of the decisive clarification of the story, in Holland itself, as Professor Niermeyer writes, the legend has proved stronger than historical criticism. Liudgard is still called a Byzantine princess in the *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biographisch Woordenboek* and even in the latest edition (1948) of *Winkler Prins’* encyclopedia.

As a matter of fact, Liudgard was the daughter of Count Siegfried of Luxemburg. His sister, another daughter of Siegfried, was Kunigunde the Empress, wife of Henry II of Germany (1002–1024). Liudgard married the West-Frisian Count Arnulf, a son of Count Theodoric (Dietrich) II, who died in 988 and whose younger son, Egbert, as we have indicated above, was appointed by Otto II chancellor of the empire in 976 and archbishop of Treves in 977. Liudgard and Arnulf, who died in 993, had a son Theodoric,

¹⁰ Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon, VI, 19 (14): Fresones (rex) navali exercitu adiens ab ceptis contumacibus desistere et magnum Liudgardae sororis regine zelum placere coegit. Ed. F. Kurze (Hannover, 1889), p. 144; see Kurze’s note 13. See also IX, 27 (13): imperatricis nostrae nepotem Thiedricum. Kurze, p. 255. Thietmar means here Dietrich (Dirk) III, Count of Holland, a son of Arnulf and Liutgard, and nephew of the Empress Cunigunde, wife of Henry II.

¹¹ III idus Maii Liukart comitissa soror Chunigundis imperatricis obiit. Vitae Heinrici et Cunegundis Impp. Adalberti Vita Heinrici II. Imperatoris, MGSS, IV, p. 791.

¹² See R. Wilmans, *Jahrbücher des Deutschen Reichs unter der Herrschaft König und Kaiser Otto’s III. 983–1002* (Berlin, 1840), pp. 214–215 (a special excursus VII: Luitgarde und Gebert). S. Hirsch, *Jahrbücher des Deutschen Reichs unter Heinrich II. I* (Berlin, 1862), p. 352 and n. 3 (he refers to Wilmans’ study). O. Oppermann, *Untersuchungen zur nord-niederländischen Geschichte des 10. bis 13. Jahrhunderts. I. Die Egmonder Fälschungen* (Utrecht, 1920), p. 107. *Idem*, *Fontes Egmundenser* (Utrecht, 1933), introduction, p. 40*. P. J. Blok, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Volk*, sec. printing, I (Leiden, 1912), p. 98; in English (from the first printing), *History of the People of the Netherlands*, I (New York–London, 1898), p. 86. J. F. Niermeijer, “Lotharingen en Friesland onder Duitse Koningsmacht 925–1076,” *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, vol. II (Utrecht, 1950), p. 19 and note 2 (with reference to the above mentioned statement of Kluit).

who at the age of twelve became Count Theodoric (Dietrich) III. During his minority Liudgard was his guardian. He died in 1039. In view of this accumulation of specific facts, the name of Liudgard must be erased from the genealogical tables of Byzantium, and may be mentioned only to remind us of an historical error, which although fully classified has surprisingly survived even up to our own day.